

Enfield snatch killer goal in injury time

WHEN Terry Reardon scored one of the best goals of his career in the 69th minute of Tuesday night's Rothmans Isthmian League battle, it seemed Wycombe Wanderers had taken the three crucial points they needed to keep pace with leaders Enfield. As the 90 minute mark passed the Blues were holding out. Then, in the third minute of injury time, the leaders hit back with a killer second goal to equalise and rob Wycombe of two points — two points that could prove decisive at the end of the season.

Wanderers will claim, and with some justification, they were robbed of victory by referee Dave Smith of Hornchurch. There were no injuries in the second half and neither trainer was on the field. One can only presume, then that Mr. Smith added on the extra three minutes for time wasting. Wycombe definitely did take their time with goalkicks and throw-ins during those last minutes and few would have quarrelled had the referee added one or perhaps two minutes. Three minutes, however, seemed too severe.

It was in that vital third minute of additional time that the home side clinched their second goal — a goal that must have been like a kick in the teeth to Wycombe. The champions had recovered from 0-1 at half time to take a deserved lead and then, after defending stoutly, they found themselves with just one point for their trouble.

The Blues knew full well that there could be only one result on Tuesday if they were to really start cutting back Enfield's massive 11 point lead at the top of the table. The draw now means that Enfield are still well out in front with 11 points in the bag and they have to lose twice if Wanderers are to retain the title they won last year. Dagenham, after their bad spell over Easter, are right back in contention, just one point behind the top two.

Nevertheless, there are still 11 games outstanding before the end of the season and a bad run by either side could cost them the championship. Enfield's run-in is by no means an easy one — and they still have to come to Loakes Park. That, however, will be of little consolation to Wycombe after Tuesday's incidents.

I thought Wycombe had done

Later on in the half, however, they started to get their game together. Keith Searle wasted one of their best chances when he ballooned the ball over from six yards and then in the 33rd minute, Mick Holfield set off on a characteristic run. Racing into top gear, he left one defender for pace and then cut inside another. Taking the ball wide he tried a shot on the left

upfront. A minute later, Wycombe were ahead. Steve Perrin crashed in a vicious 25 yard drive which Lowe brilliantly tipped away for a corner. From the flag kick Kennedy played the ball short to the angle of the penalty area where Reardon homed in and caught the ball perfectly on the half volley. Lowe could only watch as Terry's shot curved beautifully into the net.

It seemed as if it would be enough as the minutes ticked away to full time. Enfield, pushing forward constantly, were almost caught on a couple of occasions but managed to clear the moments of danger.

They went close to pulling the scores back to 2-2 when John Tone beat Hand inside the box and sent in a shot which Maskell could only parry, but Mead was on hand to thump the ball clean out of the ground from the six yard box. Things were still far from cut and dry for Wycombe but with Reardon playing well in midfield, it seemed they had done enough for victory.

The match passed the 90 minute mark. In the 91st Enfield won a corner but Wycombe cleared. The second minute of injury time passed and then Enfield launched one final attack. From a throw-in on the right, Tony Jennings slung over a cross. Amidst scramble inside the penalty area Les Eason found the space to crash in a shot which took a deflection and struck the underside of the bar before finding the back of the net.

There was hardly any time for a Wycombe reply. A few seconds later the final whistle went to leave Wanderers well and truly shattered. Their supporters were also frustrated. Many of them had gathered around the players tunnel to salute victory and there were some ugly scenes with punches thrown before the players and officials finally left the field.

ENFIELD: M. Lowe; A. Jennings, P. Fry, B. Wilson, F. Callaghan; M. O'Sullivan, J. Tone, A. Jackett, L. Eason; D. Baker, D. Gill. Sub B. Davis (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; D. Alexander, K. Mead, A. Phillips, G. Hand; H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, M. Holfield; A. Horseman (sub D. Evans 68 mins), K. Searle, S. Perrin.

Referee: D. Smith (Hornchurch).
Half-time: 1-0. **Goalscorers:** Enfield — Baker (39), Eason (93); Wycombe — Horseman (48 pen.), Reardon (69).

Enfield 2, Wycombe Wanderers 2

Report by STUART EARP

enough to win this battle of the giants. They were never at their best throughout the match but at least they showed more imagination upfront than the home side. The way they hauled themselves back into the game was also highly commendable.

The Blues retained the side that drew at Bishop's Stortford on Saturday, with Dylan Evans replacing Dave Bullock as substitute. The switch was predictable and emphasised Wycombe's total accent on attack.

SCORCHING START

The game was given a scorching start in only the second minute when Derek Baker brought a brilliant save from Maskell. A poor header from Alan Phillips started the danger, Baker catching the ball with full power and sending it screaming towards the top left hand corner. Maskell did remarkably well to turn it around the post.

Dennis Gill, Enfield's coloured striker renowned for his speed, gave Wycombe a taste of his ability in the fourth when he outpaced Gary Hand and fired in a shot which Maskell couldn't hold. Keith Mead was on hand to head the ball off the line.

With Gill and Baker both covering acres of ground, the Wycombe defence came under a good deal of pressure early on. They were never given time to start attacking movements from defensive positions and often sent hurried clearances upfield. Wanderers just couldn't settle into their usual game and gave away several free kicks in the first half.

foot but the ball sailed high and wide.

Then, with 39 minutes gone, Enfield broke clear and went ahead. Wycombe were pressing in the home half when the ball ran loose to O'Sullivan. He thumped a pass downfield and Baker burst between two defenders. Maskell came out to narrow the angle but could not take enough weight off Baker's shot which bounced slowly into the net.

Baker took the goal well, and although there was a suspicion of offside, he left the visitors' defence for dead when racing through. He almost repeated the dose just on half time but his ambitious lob went wide.

Wanderers must have been disappointed in conceding this type of goal but they didn't have to wait long for an equaliser. Only three minutes of the new half had elapsed when Hand sent a long ball upfield. Searle controlled it well and set off on a run chased by Enfield centre back Brian Wilson. Inside the box, Searle was sent sprawling by Wilson and the referee quietly but firmly awarded the penalty. Tony Horseman steered the ball past Mick Lowe's right hand to send the Wycombe supporters wild with delight.

This was just the tonic Wycombe needed. Their confidence came flooding back and for the first time in the game, they played their own brand of positive football with neat first time passing giving the home defence a good deal of trouble.

Kennedy fired just over on the volley and in the 68th minute Evans replaced Horseman